



The Barnard Bulletin

MAY 2021

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A VERMONT WRITER

BY MARGARET EDWARDS

This column is an offering of The Danforth Library in Barnard and a chance to introduce a Vermont writer who deserves wider renown.

Helen Maria Winslow

1851 – 1938



A girl child born in Westfield, Vermont, on the 13th of April in 1851 was remarkably blue-blooded for a Vermonter who came into the world so close to the Canadian border. She was “the ninth generation of descent from Kenelm Winslow, a brother of Governor Winslow, of the Plymouth Colony.” And her great-grandmother Winslow became, by marriage, Abigail Adams.

Little Helen Maria Winslow grew up quite naturally expecting great things of herself, and it’s no surprise that in her maturity she would dedicate herself to writing about women’s issues, including social reform and the suffrage movement. But she also found time and inspiration to write poems that left ideology alone.

Helen’s father, Don Avery Winslow was a musician and composer, “a leader in musical circles” and member of the first English opera company organized in the United States. The Winslows moved briefly to Greenfield, Massachusetts, then came north again to settle in St. Albans, Vermont. Helen’s mother, Mary (Newton) Wins-

low, was a linguist, scholar, and poet, who made sure her four daughters got good instruction. Helen was educated at the Vermont Academy and the State Normal School—then she “finished” her education studying languages and literature in Boston.

Beginning to write early in her life, Helen chose a pen name for herself: Aunt Philury. Her first publications were her “Aunt Philury Papers” and a short story entitled “Jack.” After her studies in Boston, she came back to live quietly at home with her family as any unmarried daughter of the time would do. Writing was her keen interest but not yet a serious occupation. Then, in 1882, when Helen was 31, her mother died. Four years later, her father’s remarriage precipitated a break-up of the family home. With her three sisters—Mary, Isabel, and Harriet—Helen moved to the Boston suburb of Roxbury, and there her writing career began in earnest.

Writing for a living has never been easy, but Helen Winslow was dedicated and energetic. Her first serialized story had been “The Shawsheen Mills,” published before she moved to Roxbury in a magazine called *The Yankee Blade*. In 1886, the year of her move, she published “A Bohemian Chapter” as a serial in *The Boston Beacon*. This story told of the struggles of a woman artist in Boston—and at that point she knew by living them what such struggles were.

Here in a list of her published books, her preoccupations are reflected in their topics. But it’s evident that she was writing “for the market” and had to shape her prose always to fit what would sell.

- Salome Shepard: Reformer (1893)
- Concerning Cats: My Own and Some Others (1900)
- Concerning Polly (1902)
- Literary Boston of To-day (1902)
- The Woman of Tomorrow (1905)
- Peggy at Spinster Farm (1908)
- A Woman for Mayor: A Novel of To-day (1910)
- (by Helen M. Winslow and Walter Dean Goldbeck)
- The Pleasuring of Susan Smith (1912)
- At the Sign of the Town Pump (1913)

The Pleasuring of Susan Smith sounds racy if not pornographic, but this was Boston when “banned in Boston” was in its heyday. Helen Winslow put together something for children called *Little Journeys in Literature*. She wrote a novel she subtitled “a Woman’s Club story” that was titled *The President of Quex*. She joined forces with writer Frances Elizabeth Willard to publish *Occupations for Women*. This is a book with a remarkable subtitle, selling itself as: *A Book of Practical Suggestions For the Material Advancement, the Mental and Physical Development, And the Moral and Spiritual Uplift of Women*.

Winslow needed to make a living with her pen, and what she wrote had to be publishable, first and foremost. Her

Cont. next page - Winslow

Winslow - Cont. from front page

topics were the topics of her era. There was hardly room for any private “self” to flourish. And yet, always in addition to the traditional, readily saleable and popular material, Winslow wrote poetry. Her poems were largely free of the themes of her books. In poetry she allowed herself to appreciate the natural world; and that natural world seemed often inspired by her native Vermont. Here is an example:

August

*The yellow golderod is dressed
In gala-day attire;
The glowing redweed by the fence
Shines like a crimson fire;
And from the hot field’s farthest edge
The cricket’s soft refrain
With mellow accent tells the tale
That August’s here again.*

*In shining blue the aster wild
Unfolds her petals fair;
The clematis, up-reaching seeks
To clasp and kiss the air;
The brilliant poppy flaunts her head
Amidst the ripening grain,
And adds her voice to swell the song
That August’s here again.*

*The dusty thistle by the road
Scatters a silvery spray;
The sun pours down his scorching beams
Upon the fainting day;
The blackberry vine bends with its weight
Of fruit down in the lane;
And adds its testimony, too,
That August’s here again.*

*The wild hop, from the young elm’s bough,
Sways on the languid breeze,
And here and there the autumn tints
Gleam faintly through the trees.
All Nature helps to swell the song
And chant the same refrain;
July and June have slipped away
And August’s here again.*

Helen Winslow was remarkably purposeful in putting together a literary career, not just by wielding her pen, but by accepting speaking engagements. She learned very soon that a writer on a salary leads a less frantic life. She served first as an in-house writer with *The Boston Transcript*, and later she became one of the regular staff of *The Boston Advertiser*, doing work at the same time for Boston’s *Saturday Evening Gazette*. She published her work in almost every Boston daily, and there were many of them in her time, with such names as *The Christian Union*, *Christian at Work*, *Drake’s Magazine*, *Youth’s Companion*, and *Cottage Hearth* to mention just a few.

Winslow was never shy. She got out and about serving as treasurer of the New England Woman’s Press Associ-

ation, an organization she helped found along with five others. She also became vice-president of the Press League, and lectured before women’s clubs and societies, and joined many of those same clubs and societies, which was how she became well known and sought-after as a paid public speaker.



Helen M. Winslow (1897) at the age of 46

In the photo above, Winslow looks the very image of the regal and prosperous Boston club woman, at home in polite society. She never married—but, it’s fair to say, she never *needed* to marry. By middle age, she was financially self-sufficient. When she died, she was buried in Shirley, Massachusetts, never having returned to live in her native state. The girl who came from “north of Boston” might seem to have vanished entirely. But in this next poem, both in its sympathy and in its choice of subject, the Vermonter returns, ascendant.

In Sugarin’-Time

*It’s sugarin’ time up country; an’ settin’ here in town
I seem to hear the “drip, drip, drip” of sap a-tricklin’
down
Into them wooden buckets in our old sugar place,
Afore Josiah died, an’ our only daughter, Grace,
Insisted ‘t wasn’t no ways safe for me to live alone
Up in that old brown farmhouse that long’s I live I
own;
And naught would do but I must come an’ stay along
o’ her,
Where sugarin’ might be hayin’ time—in all this bus-*

Cont. next page - Winslow

Winslow - Cont. from previous page

*tlin' stir
Where smells o' spring an' tricklin' sap an' wild
flowers never come.
There ain't no chance for such things round Grace's
city home;
An' sugarin' time's no different from summer or
from fall—
I wisht Josiah 'n' me was back, a-workin' hard an'
all.

I seem to see the tossels shakin' out upon the trees,
I seem to smell the perfume of the May-flowers in the
breeze,
I seem to feel the summer a-comin' 'crost the hills,
I seem, up in the pasture, to hear the singin' rills;
I see the mowin' lot, an' hear the sharpenin' of the
blades,
I hear the cattle lowin', I go berryin' in the glades,
I smell the harvest ripenin' over in the corner lot,
I see Josiah bringin' home that last new pair he
bought;
I remember how together, when the children went
away—
Grown big and married—by the fire we sat at close of
day.
An' how together we had lived there fifty year, come
fall,—
I wisht Josiah 'n' me was back—a-workin' hard an'
all!

It's sugarin' time up country, but never once agin
Shall I, now nigh on eighty, see the spring a-comin'
in
The old way, thro' the maple trees, acrost the pas-
tures Brown;
For I must stay, in sugarin' time, on Beacon Street in
town.
The children never, as of old, shall I tuck in at night,
Their little feet so tired, but their happy hearts so
light.
They wouldn't go back if they could, an' I'm too old,
they say;
An' since Josiah isn't there, I let 'em have their way.

It's sugarin' time up country though, an' memories,
like the sap,
Start up an' set me longin' for Mother Nature's
lap—
An' him an' Jim—the farm, the hens, the horses in
the stall.
It's sugarin' time up country; I'm homesick, that is
all.*

There are no poetry books by Helen Maria Winslow in the Danforth Library. There are no collections of her poems available at this date (April, 2021) online from Amazon. A reprint of "In Sugarin' Time," a poem by Winslow that first appeared in *Harpers Bazar* magazine, was found in the chapbook *Favorite Vermont Poems* edited by Walter John Coates and published in 1930.

PREKINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

The Windsor Central Unified Union School District is accepting applications for the next school year. Please visit www.wcsu.net for more information, or use this [Application Form](#).

LOCAL CRYPTOGRAM

A cryptogram is a code in which one letter is substituted for another. For example, the word "Church" could be written BWMSBW. The letter B would be the letter C and would be so throughout the entire message. In this message D = M. The solution is found by trial and error. The CRYPTOGRAM answer is on the last page.

"GOYK GUCKO! LCX OIIPLT
IVJ QECKIGNU GPOQL,
CG XVYAV QCDP TOJQ
Y XYIV TPQYFL VOHP EOQI;
O EOKI YL OEKYU
OLT O EOKI YL DOJ
IVCN AUOYD'QL, OLT RCIV
ACDDOLT DJ INLPGNU UOJ;
OLT OQ IVP ACLGYLPQ
CG IXC DCLIVQ OKP IVYLP
IC QYLF CG RCIV
IVP TCNRUP IOQB RP DYLP."
-CHYT

SPRING SNOWSTORM MAKES THINGS DIFFICULT



Part of a large maple blocks a driveway on Lime Pond Road.

April showers may bring May flowers, but there are times when April snows bring down trees.

THE PLANNING COMMISSION meets on the first Monday of the month at 7:00pm at the Town offices.

ECFIBER Governing Board meets the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 7pm in 012 Oakes Hall, Vermont Law School. More information at <https://www.ecfiber.net/>

BARNARD CONSERVATION COMMISSION meets the second Monday of the month, 7:00pm, Town Hall.

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR zoning@barnardvt.us, 234-9211. By appointment only, no standing hours during due to the COVID-19 restrictions. After hours call 603-762-5280.

BEES MEETINGS are held at 6:30pm on the 2nd Thursday of each month in the library at the school.

DANFORTH LIBRARY HOURS: Wed 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. and Sat 10:00 - Noon. Curbside only. Please call 802-234-9408 with requests. Mask required for pick up. Wi-Fi access available from outside the building.

SELECTBOARD meets the first and third Wednesday of the month at the Town offices at 7:00pm.

SELECTBOARD ASSISTANT, Rob Ramrath, selectboard@barnardvt.us, 234-2911 x 2, Cell 603-762-5280. By phone at any time, in person by appointment.

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR, Rob Ramrath, zoning@barnardvt.us, 234-2911 x 2, Cell 603-762-5280. By phone at any time, in person by appointment.

TOWN CLERK office hours are Monday & Tuesday, 8:00am-3:30pm. Public access is restricted. Call 234-9211 for an appointment.

THE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD meets the third Thursday of the month at 7:00pm at the Barnard Town Hall as necessary.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY Programs to be announced. Questions? Email: historicalbarnard1761@gmail.com

BARNARD LISTERS listeners@barnardvt.us, 234-9576. Office hours, except holidays: Wednesday 9:00am - 11:00am; by appointment; or anytime a Lister is in the office.

THE BARNARD ENERGY COMMITTEE meets on the 2nd Tuesday of the month, 7:00pm at the Town Hall

YOGA CLASSES offered at Danforth Library, Mondays 9:00am - 10:30am with Amanda Anderson. Classes are by donation; for more information contact Amanda@innerlift瑜伽.com. Yoga Classes are also offered on Thursdays from 9-10:30 with Beth Umba. Contact Beth at: bethumba@gmail.com.

BARNARD GENERAL STORE, Monday-Saturday: 7am-7pm, Sundays: 8am-6pm. <https://www.facebook.com/barnardgeneralstore>

BARNARD LISTSERV: to subscribe please send an email to: barnard-subscribe@lists.vitalcommunities.org

RECYCLING Click [here](#) for Hours and Regulations

THE BARNARD INN is running a "Feeding Neighbors & Sustaining Community" campaign. Purchase an e-Gift Card and in turn the chefs will feed neighbors. Whole chicken dinners (serves 4-6) and individual sized meals to help feed Vermonters in need. Thank you and please stay safe. E-Gift Cards are available at www.barnardinn.com.

RACE AROUND THE LAKE 2021

LIVE/IN-PERSON OR VIRTUAL

RACE AROUND THE LAKE 2021 will be a hybrid race with both in-person and virtual options. The in-person 5K and 10K races will take place May 23, and the Virtual races can take place anytime, up through May 28th! Space is limited for the in-person race, so sign up soon! In-person races will include the same beautiful trails around Silver Lake we always use! Start/Finish area is preliminarily scheduled for Silver Lake State Park, pending updated gathering rules for VT State Parks (due in April). Alternative Start/Finish location in downtown Barnard will be announced if necessary.

Events

5K Run/Walk, 10K Run

Live/In-Person May 23 - currently limited to 150 runners

Adults: \$35, 12 & under: \$15.

10K Race begins at 10:30am, 5K Race begins at 11am.

Interval Starts will be used to space out runners and walkers. Masks are required in the start/finish line area

After-Race activities may be limited this year, but lunch and awards will still be provided. Sign up before May 5th to receive a race T-shirt!

Virtual 5K Run/Walk, 10K Run through May 28

Adults: \$25, 12 and Under: \$10

Race anytime, anywhere! Clock yourself and post your race time to our website by May 28th

Consider racing our course after the in-person race - we will leave the course marked and provide virtual maps to our virtual participants. More info and Registration through [runsignup](#)

Thank you for supporting BarnArts! All funds raised directly support our Youth Programming and make this summer's Summer Youth Theater camp possible!

BarnArts Center for the Arts www.barnarts.org
PO Box 41 info@barnarts.org
Barnard, VT 05031 802-234-1645 (voice mail)

CRYPTOGRAM ANSWER

"Fair Flora! Now attend thy sportful feast,
Of which some days I with design have past;
A part in April and a part in May
Thou claim'st, and both command my tuneful lay;
And as the confines of two months are thine
To sing of both the double task be mine."
- Ovid